

I cannot judge whether this goal will be met.

The American people deserve to know the details of a plan and we have the responsibility to ensure that they are included in this debate.

#### CONGRATULATIONS ON THE CONTRACT WITH AMERICA

(Mrs. SEASTRAND asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. SEASTRAND. Mr. Speaker, during the last 3 weeks, I held 11 town meetings, 3 senior citizen conferences, and a very successful agriculture conference. I always ask those in attendance to tell me what they were hearing about the new 104th Congress.

Here is one letter I received last week:

DEAR ANDREA: You asked the question, "What are you hearing?"

Our son said, "The Republicans have a chance to do something, but they will probably drop the ball." A 17-year-old cynic. Now he says, "They did it. The Republicans did it."

My cousin in Santa Barbara said her husband is so excited she was not able to tear him away from the TV coverage for the first 100 days.

In general, people say, "We can depend on the freshmen in the Congress to stand together and do what they said they could do." Congratulations on the Contract With America. Thank you for your very hard work.

Sincerely,

MARY KAY DANA.

NIPOMO, CA.

#### REPUBLICANS HAVE PROMISED MORE THAN THEY CAN DELIVER

(Mr. MILLER of California asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, Members of the House, the senior citizens of this country should be deeply concerned about the rumblings that they hear on the Republican side of the aisle.

The Republicans have now come to face the fact that they cannot give tax cuts to the wealthy, balance the budget, and preserve Medicare, so now they are devising a plan by which they can make the cuts in Medicare to provide for the tax cuts for the wealthy.

I think we have to ask ourselves, is this really what America expected at the time of election, that we would pass on massive tax cuts to the wealthiest people in this country and we would do it at the expense of the Medicare plan, the health safety net for millions of seniors who have nowhere other to turn for health care in this country? I am saying to the senior citizens of this country, keep your eyes open and your ears tuned to the news waves because what the Republicans have in store is nothing but bad for the Medicare system of this country.

If they do not do that, what they have in store is to add another \$150 bil-

lion in budget cuts to \$1 out of every \$3 that the Federal Government now spends, so they have run up against the cruel facts that they have promised more than they can deliver, and it looks like the beneficiaries of that will be the wealthy of the Nation, and the victims will be the health care of the senior citizens.

#### THE 175TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE

(Mr. ROBERTS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. ROBERTS. Mr. Speaker, doubtlessly, we will return in just a moment to the 1-minute handgrenades back and forth. But first this happy birthday greeting.

My colleagues, as chairman of the House Committee on Agriculture, we are 175 years old as of today. As we begin our work on the 1995 farm bill, it is appropriate for us to take a brief moment to reflect on the long and distinguished story and history of the committee.

April 29, 1820, Congressman Lewis Williams of North Carolina, introduced a resolution to create a Committee on Agriculture in the House of Representatives. Since that time, we have remained true to the original purpose of the committee that was stated by Congressman Williams, to guard and protect the great and leading substantial interests in this country.

Hey, the House Ag Committee over the break, 16 hearings, 5,000 farmers in attendance, over 600 witnesses. When we are 200, I can assure you we will continue to do our work, to make sure we have the best quality food at the lowest price in the history of the world.

Happy birthday, House Ag Committee.

#### WHERE IS THE BUDGET?

(Mrs. SCHROEDER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. SCHROEDER. Mr. Speaker, well, the tax cuts got passed, the circus came to the Hill, and, guess what, we still do not have a budget.

We do not have any budget because now they have got to do the tough part, the spending part, and there is nothing really there they can cut except Medicare. They do not want to cut Medicare.

You know, we have tried last year, for the last 2 years, with the President, to reform the whole health care system. Boy, we did not get any help on that side.

They promised they could do this. This was going to be so easy. Now you hear everybody, saying, "Hey, where is the President, where is the President? He ought to do this."

Well, he was here last time. He was trying to do it. We were trying to do it with him. We got no help there.

Let us get this budget out. Let us see what we are going to do to get this thing balanced, and let us stop seeing the whining for help from the White House.

#### CONTINUING TO WORK FOR THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

(Mr. JONES asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. JONES. Mr. Speaker, while home during the 3-week recess, I traveled 17 of 21 days, visited 15 of 19 counties that I have the privilege to represent, appeared on several radio talk shows, and held numerous town meetings.

Overall, people are optimistic about the direction the new Congress is going. People believe Congress is starting to represent the working man and woman and passing commonsense legislation. I sincerely believe we are in the process of rebuilding the public's trust in Congress which was lost after previous Congresses neglected to listen to the people.

In the next few months we will all have to make difficult choices. But we, as elected officials, must continue to use common sense when drafting, discussing, and voting on legislation. We must continue to work for the American people.

Ultimately, we need to stay focused to the commitment we made with the American people—to again make America a great country.

#### LEADERSHIP IS TOUGH

(Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, leadership is tough. During the welfare reform, the Republican majority pulled seniors out of that legislation and I agreed with that decision. And now it appears Medicare is off the table to pay for tax cuts and budget reduction.

The Republican majority, which is attempting to balance the budget by the year 2002, plan to cut \$400 billion out of Medicare. The Republican majority is realizing what President Clinton, and a number of other Democrats, and I said last year, when we were first elected, that to have a balanced budget we must control health care costs.

The Republican majority has promised not to cut Social Security or the military budget, and interest on the national debt, which is 20 percent of our budget, has to be paid.

Guess what? Medicare is 25 percent of everything left. And now they have promised not to tamper with that.

In 1993, the Democrats made Medicare solvent for 3 more years, without

one Republican vote, and now they are criticizing the President and Democrats for not coming up with a plan before they introduce a budget.

Today the majority criticizes us for not providing leadership on Medicare. Well, they are the majority. Leadership is tough. If the Republican majority wants to continue to live in a dream world and think that they can balance the budget without cutting health care costs, they need to come up with a plan. Medicare should not be a cut.

#### THE TRAGEDY IN OKLAHOMA CITY

(Mr. GEKAS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GEKAS. Mr. Speaker and Members of the House, following the tragedy in Oklahoma City, as was expected, tremendous rhetoric grew out of this fracas that occurred, both from the right and the left, calling for hearings on terrorism, international terrorism, domestic terrorism, paramilitary actions, all kinds of themes and theses that were propounded following that tragic event.

But we must focus once and for all on what happened there and then at that tragic moment. This was an act of mass murder, willful, deliberate, intended to kill people, and succeeded in that.

Our job, as the American people and the law enforcement and Members of Congress, communities together, must focus to bring those culprits to justice, bring them to the bar of justice, and then try them for murder and seek the death penalty. That is the analysis with which we must start in contemplating what happened in Oklahoma City on that fateful day.

The death penalty, which is favored by most people in our country, has never been more appropriate than in this particular situation.

#### GOP MEDICARE CUTS

(Mr. PALLONE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, today, the Republicans are over 2 weeks late in producing a budget.

I believe the reason for the Republican delay is that they do not know how they are going to keep all of their promises. Part of their answer to balancing the budget is to cut Medicare by over \$300 billion. This means that seniors will have to pay on average an additional \$900 in out-of-pocket expenses.

Now, Speaker GINGRICH is claiming that any Medicare cuts will be used to keep Medicare solvent. Of course he forgets to mention that Democrats have already worked to keep Medicare from going bankrupt in the past. In addition, it was Democrats, last year, who put forth an effort to reform health care and save Medicare.

I believe in balancing the budget and have always voted in support of a balanced budget, but I feel that any Medicare reform needs to arise in the context of health care reform. It is rising health care costs that are contributing to the deficit, not senior citizens.

#### OPPOSING THE AGREEMENT WITH CASTRO

(Mr. DIAZ-BALART asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Mr. Speaker, the secretly negotiated agreement between the Clinton administration and Fidel Castro, announced yesterday, to return Cuban refugees to Castro's state security is unprecedented as well as immoral.

As Speaker GINGRICH declared yesterday, for the first time in history, the U.S. Government has agreed to cooperate with a Communist dictatorship's security forces in order to carry out the forced return of refugees who managed to escape.

□ 1115

The administration now says that Castro has given it assurances that those refugees turned over to state security will not be persecuted, and yet they did not even ask Castro to abrogate his own law that requires jailtime for those caught trying to leave without permission. An administration official told me yesterday not to worry, that Castro has prosecutorial discretion. This, Mr. Speaker, this incident, this agreement, is shameful. It is another attempt to appease a totalitarian dictator who will still not be satisfied by the McGovernites who now control American foreign policy.

#### SAVAGE PLANS FOR MEDICARE

(Mr. DOGGETT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. DOGGETT. Mr. Speaker, the Gingrichites took a poll, and now they are scurrying here, there, and everywhere searching for a way to dress up their plan to slash Medicare.

The Gingrichites are understandably scared silly that the American public recognizes that what they have in mind is a raid of \$305 billion from the Medicare trust fund to fund last month's \$345 billion tax break for the privileged few.

This week the Gingrichites say, well, Medicare is in such bad financial shape that it needs surgery to survive. Well, I ask, "Why didn't they think about that last month when they were standing on this floor and they approved a contract tax bill that pulled out \$56 billion from the Medicare trust fund?"

That is right, \$56 billion from the same fund they now complain is going broke, and, having bled the trust fund, now they intend to start whacking off the benefits for America's seniors.

The Gingrichites do not plan to salvage Medicare; they plan to savage it, and I think the American people are smart enough to recognize savagery when they see it, to know the difference between savagery and salvation.

#### NATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER

(Mr. DUNCAN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. DUNCAN. Mr. Speaker, tomorrow is our National Day of Prayer, and there will be events, big and small, commemorating this all over the Nation. Every faith, every religion, believes prayer is a good thing.

If we have any hope of overcoming evil things like we saw in Oklahoma City 2 weeks ago, we need to overcome evil with good—good things like prayer.

I hope all Americans will participate in our National Day of Prayer tomorrow, at least in a small way. I do not say this in any holier-than-thou manner, because I have as many faults as anyone.

But I do believe this Nation would be a better place if more people spent more time in prayer.

The Old Testament tells us:

If my people which are called by my name shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and heal their land.

Almost all of us need some type of healing—physically, emotionally, spiritually. I hope everyone will support the National Day of Prayer tomorrow.

#### REPUBLICANS TURNING TO MEDICARE IN ORDER TO PAY FOR TAX CUTS

(Mr. DURBIN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. Speaker, why have the Gingrich Republicans failed to meet the statutory deadline for passing a House budget resolution? The same Gingrich Republicans who were so proud of the fact that they met their hundred-day deadline for the Republican Contract With America, they read letters, fan mail, all sorts of comments from their districts about how proud they were, and yet when it comes down to the most basic thing, the spending bill for the Federal Government, the Gingrich Republicans have just dropped the ball.

Well, Mr. Speaker, the reason is pretty simple. The last item in the Republican contract was a Republican tax bill which adds \$600 billion to our national debt over the next 10 years. When they sit down and try to figure out this \$600 billion and how to make it up, they run out of solutions.

Well, where did they turn? They turned to one of the most important